

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-37 (canceled)

38. (previously presented) A method of threading a moving length of optical fiber through a component in an optical fiber draw, optical fiber winding or optical fiber testing process, comprising:

activating an aspirator to obtain said optical fiber at a first location and moving said aspirator in at least two dimensions to move said optical fiber to a second location to thread said optical fiber through a component in said optical fiber draw process.

39. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein said moving length of optical fiber is a moving length of optical fiber in an optical fiber draw process, and said method further comprises orienting at least a first, second, and third pulley so that, when said aspirator moves said optical fiber to said second location, said pulleys are disposed along the length of said optical fiber and on alternating sides of said optical fiber, and said method further comprises moving said second pulley across the path of said optical fiber to retain said optical fiber in contact with said first, second, and third pulleys, thereby causing said optical fiber to move in a serpentine path.

40. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein said aspirator is moved to guide said optical fiber onto at least one guide pulley by said aspirator guiding said optical fiber between or against a pair of surfaces which are disposed on each side of said guide pulley, said surfaces sloping toward said guide pulley to thereby guide said optical fiber onto said guide pulley.

41. (previously presented) The method of claim 39, wherein said aspirator is moved to guide said optical fiber onto at least one guide pulley by said aspirator guiding said optical fiber between or against a pair of surfaces which are disposed on

each side of said guide pulley, said surfaces sloping toward said guide pulley to thereby guide said optical fiber onto said guide pulley.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, wherein said second location is proximate to a optical fiber winding spool.

43. (previously presented) The method of claim 42, further comprising engaging said optical fiber at a point along said optical fiber which is between the aspirator and the source of optical fiber, and winding said engaged optical fiber onto said spool.

44. (previously presented) The method of claim 43, wherein said engaging said optical fiber comprises engaging said optical fiber by a snagger tooth which is located on said spool

45. (previously presented) The method of claim 38, further comprising engaging said optical fiber at a point along the length of said optical fiber which is between the source of said optical fiber and said aspirator, and moving said engaged optical fiber to facilitate threading of said optical fiber through said at least one component of said optical fiber draw process.

46. (previously presented) The method of claim 45, wherein said engaging an optical fiber step comprises engaging a moving length of optical fiber, moving said engaged length of moving optical fiber into contact with a capstan to thereby thread said optical fiber around said capstan.

47. (original) The method of claim 46, wherein simultaneous with said threading of said capstan, said aspirator is moving to said second location, and said second location is proximate to a winding spool.

48. (previously presented) The method of claim 47, wherein said moving length of optical fiber is a moving length of optical fiber in an optical fiber draw process, and said method further comprises orienting at least a first, second, and third pulley so that, when said aspirator moves said optical fiber to said second location, said pulleys

are disposed along the length of said optical fiber and on alternating sides of said desired optical fiber, and said method further comprises moving said second pulley across the path of said optical fiber to retain said optical fiber in contact with said first, second, and third pulleys, thereby causing said optical fiber to move in a serpentine path.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising moving said aspirator to guide said optical fiber onto at least one guide pulley by said aspirator guiding said optical fiber between or against a pair of surfaces which are disposed on each side of said guide pulley, said surfaces sloping toward said guide pulley to thereby guide said optical fiber onto said guide pulley.

50. (canceled)

51. (canceled)

52. (withdrawn) A method of changing optical fiber storage spools in an optical fiber winding process, comprising:

cutting the fiber being fed from a fiber supply source after a first fiber storage spool has received a desired amount of optical fiber;

capturing the fiber being supplied from said fiber supply source in an aspirator;
and

moving said aspirator and a second fiber storage spool with respect to one another to rethread the fiber onto said second fiber storage spool.

53. (withdrawn) The method of claim 52, wherein said fiber supply source is a moving length of fiber in a fiber draw operation.

54. (withdrawn) The method of claim 52, wherein a snagger tooth on said second storage spool snags said fiber onto said second storage spool.

55. (withdrawn) The method of claim 52, wherein said aspirator is moved in at least two dimensions to wind said fiber onto said second storage spool.

56. (canceled)

57. (withdrawn) In a process for winding a length of fiber being drawn in an optical fiber preform in a fiber draw process onto at least one storage spool, the improvement comprising, after the length of fiber has begun to be stored on said at least one storage spool, identifying fiber which is out of specification and removing said out of specification fiber from the source of fiber before the fiber is wound onto said at least one storage spool.

58. (withdrawn) The method of claim 57, wherein said method comprises winding said length of fiber onto a first storage spool, and said method further comprises cutting and removing a portion of said length of fiber, and rewinding at least a portion of the remainder of said length of said fiber onto a second storage spool.